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**1 - Tremors at Bayou Corne salt dome halt work again Friday, BRAdv, 3/24/13**

<http://theadvocate.com/home/5510933-125/tremors-at-bayou-corne-salt>

Summary: The head of Louisiana's Department of Natural Resources named 13 scientists and other experts Friday to serve on a blue-ribbon commission tasked with determining the long-term stability of the area around northern Assumption Parish's sinkhole.

**2 - EPA approves Arkansas greenhouse gas program, Penn Energy, 3/22/13**

<http://www.pennenergy.com/articles/pennenergy/2013/03/epa-approves-arkansas-greenhouse-gas-program.html>

Summary: The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is approving the State of Arkansas' program for permitting new and modified facilities that emit significant amounts of greenhouse gas pollution (GHG) into the air. The Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) worked closely with EPA to develop a state program to replace the existing federal program and submitted it for EPA review in November.

**3 - Inhofe Introduces Seven Energy, Environment Amendments to Senate Fy'14 Budget, Inhofe News Release, 3/22/13**

<http://www.elp.com/news/2013/03/22/inhofe-introduces-seven-energy-environment-amendments-to-senate-fy-14-budget.html>

Summary: U.S. Sen. Jim Inhofe (R-Okla.), senior member of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, today filed seven energy and environment-related amendments to the Senate Budget Resolution for Fiscal Year 2014.

**4 - Toxic Bayou Corne sinkhole in Louisiana slowly swallowing up state, Natural News, 3/22/13**

[http://www.naturalnews.com/039603\\_sinkholes\\_louisiana\\_land.html#ixzz2OZA6N6az](http://www.naturalnews.com/039603_sinkholes_louisiana_land.html#ixzz2OZA6N6az)

Summary: (NaturalNews) Last summer, a rural area of southeastern Louisiana known as Assumption Parish was changed forever following the unexpected formation of a giant sinkhole that suddenly appeared one day out of nowhere. This mysterious sinkhole, which was later dubbed the "Great Louisiana Sinkhole," has been gradually gaining in size now for about seven months, and it appears to be picking up speed, having reportedly swallowed up an entire acre of land in just one day, and three acres of land in under a week.

**5 - Rio Arriba County fracking ban halted, Farmington Times, 3/23/13**

[http://www.daily-times.com/farmington-news/ci\\_22857639/rio-arriba-county-fracking-ban-halted](http://www.daily-times.com/farmington-news/ci_22857639/rio-arriba-county-fracking-ban-halted)

Summary: Discussions in Rio Arriba County of a possible hydraulic fracturing ban have been sidelined after industry representatives lobbied against the idea. The commission did not discuss fracturing at a meeting Thursday although a resident did raise the issue in public comments and a public hearing scheduled for March 28 to discuss a proposed oil and gas ordinance has been canceled.

**6 - Mapping the Noxious Ozone Plumes Over Houston, Atl Cities.com, 3/22/13**

<http://www.theatlanticcities.com/technology/2013/03/mapping-ozone-storms-over-houston/5058/>

Summary: And now there's an app that monitors chemical weather – in particular, the noxious clouds of ozone that noiselessly drift through cities, scorching lungs, triggering asthma attacks and herding urbanites toward their premature deaths.

**7 - EPA gives Ark. OK to issue greenhouse gas permits, SFGate, 3/23/13**

<http://www.sfgate.com/news/science/article/EPA-gives-Ark-OK-to-issue-greenhouse-gas-permits-4379139.php#ixzz2OZCkt3eR>

Summary: LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (AP) — Arkansas will become the first state in the south-central region to develop its own program for issuing permits to facilities that emit greenhouse-gas pollution.

**8 - City Corner: Anything you put into gutters, drains may end up in our drinking water, Victoria Adv, 3/24/13**

**[http://www.victoriaadvocate.com/news/2013/mar/24/city\\_city\\_corner\\_032513\\_204202/](http://www.victoriaadvocate.com/news/2013/mar/24/city_city_corner_032513_204202/)**

**Summary:** I recently received some questions about stormwater and storm drains and how they are regulated. Please see the questions and responses below. What is stormwater?

**9 - McKinney council renews old debate on fluoride, Dentistryiq.com, 3/25/13**

**<http://www.dentistryiq.com/news/2013/03/25/mckinney-council-renews-old-debate-on-fluoride.html>**

**Summary:** In some ways, this latest fight over fluoridated water echoes back to the 1950s and '60s, when adding fluoride to drinking water was either a panacea for the problems of tooth decay or a ploy to poison the American water supply. The language is far more civil now, and few call fluoridation a communist plot. But at a recent City Council meeting in McKinney, passions ran high on both sides, with the applause from partisans so frequent that Mayor Brian Loughmiller cautioned that clapping for every speaker would only lengthen a hearing that ultimately ran more than two hours. If the council ultimately decides it doesn't want fluoride in the water - the issue is on the agenda for a work session in early April - it's only a tiny first step.

**10 - Manchin amendment would block funding for 'unattainable' EPA coal rules, News OK, 3/22/13**

**<http://newsok.com/manchin-amendment-would-block-funding-for-unattainable-epa-coal-rules/article/feed/517317>**

**Summary:** Sen. Joe Manchin, D-W.V., introduced an amendment to the fiscal year 2014 Budget Resolution today that would block funding for proposed Environmental Protection Agency regulations governing coal plant emissions.

**11 - Arkansas, Oklahoma Senators Want Farms Exempt from EPA Rule, AR Bus, 3/25/13**

**<http://www.arkansasbusiness.com/article/91287/arkansas-oklahoma-senators-want-farms-exempt-from-epa-rule>**

**Summary:** Arkansas' two U.S. senators and one from Oklahoma joined three other senators in introducing a bill to exempt some farmers from an Environmental Protection Agency requirement regarding fuel storage.

**12 - Meeting Set in Jasper on Hog Farm, ELP, 3/23/13**

**<http://www.elp.com/news/2013/03/23/meeting-set-in-jasper-on-hog-farm.html>**

**Summary:** The Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality will hold an informational meeting in Jasper on May 8 to provide information on a permit issued for C & H Hog Farms to operate in Mount Judea.

**13 - Environmentalists Seek To Force EPA To Weigh Climate Effects In Sewer Pact, Inside EPA, 3/25/13**

**<http://insideepa.com/201303252428816/EPA-Daily-News/Daily-News/environmentalists-seek-to-force-epa-to-weigh-climate-effects-in-sewer-pact/menu-id-95.html>**

**Summary:** Environmentalists are seeking to force EPA to consider sea-level rise and other effects of climate change in a proposed enforcement settlement seeking to prevent overflows in Miami-Dade County's sewage collection and transmission system, in a case which could force the agency to adopt a policy stance beyond its current posture.

**14 - Emergency management officials gather in New Orleans Monday for the 13th annual National Hurricane Conference, NOLA, 3/25/13**

**[http://www.nola.com/environment/index.ssf/2013/03/emergency\\_management\\_officials.html#incart\\_river](http://www.nola.com/environment/index.ssf/2013/03/emergency_management_officials.html#incart_river)**

**Summary:** Emergency management officials are meeting in New Orleans this week to review lessons learned during last year's Hurricanes Isaac and Sandy and to find out the latest techniques to respond and recover from future hurricanes.

# Tremors at Bayou Corne salt dome halt work again Friday



Screen shot from Louisiana State Police video shot on March 21, 2013, of the Assumption Parish sinkhole.

**BY DAVID J. MITCHELL**

River Parishes bureau

The head of Louisiana's Department of Natural Resources named 13 scientists and other experts Friday to serve on a blue-ribbon commission tasked with determining the long-term stability of the area around northern Assumption Parish's sinkhole.

The 13-acre sinkhole and consequences of its emergence and continued growth, such as methane trapped under the Bayou Corne area, have forced the evacuation of 350 residents for more than seven months.

The sinkhole, found in swamps between Bayou Corne and Grand Bayou on Aug. 3, is believed to have been caused by a failed Texas Brine Co. LLC cavern mined into the Napoleonville Dome.

Members of the new panel are being asked to set up scientifically based benchmarks in regard to the sinkhole and then determine when they have been met in order to give assurances that the Bayou Corne area is safe for the return of evacuated residents.

“The work of this commission is crucial to the future of public safety in the Bayou Corne area,” DNR Secretary Stephen Chustz said in a prepared statement announcing the 13 appointments.

“We must ensure we have done all that we can to get the right people to provide the right answers in making recommendations for the future of the people who want to return,” Chustz said.

The secretary made the appointments in consultation with Jim Welsh, state Commissioner of Conservation, and Kevin Davis, director of the Governor’s Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness, the statement says. The Office of Conservation is part of DNR.

Gov. Bobby Jindal called for formation of the commission earlier this month after meeting with Assumption Parish public officials and Texas Brine executives about the sinkhole.

DNR officials said in a statement that the blue-ribbon commission’s first meeting will be held in early April. Patrick Courreges, DNR spokesman, has said some of the group’s meetings would be public, but it was not clear Friday if the panel’s inaugural session would be open to the public or not.

Underscoring the lingering concerns about the growing sinkhole and when it may stabilize, yet another round of seismic activity forced parish officials to halt work around the sinkhole Friday morning for the second time in a little more than a week, officials said.

John Boudreaux, Assumption Parish’s director of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness, said the seismic activity was detected about 7 a.m. Friday under the sinkhole and the failed Texas Brine cavern.

Seismic monitors detected an increase Friday in the “very long period” tremors that scientists have said indicate fluid and gas movement below the sinkhole, parish officials said in a blog post.

Parish officials added that Friday’s seismic activity was limited to the sinkhole and the Texas Brine cavern. The activity appears to have had no effect on a second Texas Brine cavern nearby for which structural concerns recently have been raised, parish officials said.

Water movement in the sinkhole and increased bubbling along its western edge were also detected Friday, the post says.

Boudreaux said work was stopped within the 71-acre area surrounded by a berm mandated to encircle the sinkhole. The shutdown area took in the sinkhole's lake-like surface.

He said crews had been working on oil retardant boom on the sinkhole at the time the work was stopped about 8:30 a.m. Friday.

But he said work related to 3-D seismic surveying of the subsurface — which involves the firing of small, buried explosive charges — continued Friday because it is outside the berm area.

The new blue-ribbon panel members include some of the experts who already have been working on the sinkhole under contract to the state Office of Conservation or on a scientific working group monitoring the sinkhole.

Members Gary Hecox, senior CB&I hydrogeologist, and Will Pettitt, an Itasca Group rock mechanic expert, both have delivered presentations to residents and the state Legislature about the sinkhole.

Working group members include David Borns, Sandia National Laboratories Geotechnology and Engineering Program manager, and Thomas Van Biersel, DNR hydrogeologist and a former Louisiana Geological Survey professor at LSU. Van Biersel is coordinating the sinkhole working group, DNR officials said.

Sandia researches salt domes for the federal Strategic Petroleum Reserve, which stores the nation's emergency supply of crude oil in Louisiana and Texas salt domes.

Chustz said in the statement Friday that while experts around the world were sought, the panel includes scientists who already have been working on the sinkhole as well as a Bayou Corne-area resident selected, "to ensure that the members share our sense of urgency."

Before Friday's work stoppage, a burst of early morning tremors on March 13 caused work to be halted for about a day inside the same berm area.

That halt was followed by one of the sinkhole's periodic burps on Sunday morning, when oil and debris surfaced, as well as the collapse of 0.95 of an acre of land on the sinkhole's western edge.

The sinkhole's surface is believed to be about 13 acres in size with the addition of that last slough-in and with a re-estimation of the sinkhole's remaining edge, which added a few acres of surface also.

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## EPA approves Arkansas greenhouse gas program

The [U.S. Environmental Protection Agency \(EPA\)](#) is approving the State of Arkansas' program for permitting new and modified facilities that emit significant amounts of [greenhouse gas pollution](#) (GHG) into the air. The Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) worked closely with EPA to develop a state program to replace the existing federal program and submitted it for EPA review in November.

Arkansas' authority to issue air permits for new or modified GHG pollution sources will become effective in April, just four months after the EPA's proposed approval of the program. Arkansas is the first state in the Region to replace a federal implementation plan with their own State program, which will eliminate the need for businesses to seek air permits from two separate regulatory agencies. This action will increase efficiency and allow for industry to continue to grow in Arkansas.

"Business and communities benefit when environmental regulators are effective and efficient in doing their job," said Regional Administrator Ron Curry. "We look forward to working with our partners at ADEQ as we continue to address our common goal of protecting people and the environment. I am especially pleased to recognize Director Marks and her team for this important accomplishment."

"This is an important step forward for our agency and the state. This gets us back to a one-stop permitting shop, allowing businesses requesting air permits to take their entire application to one agency and for us to review the complete package," said the Director of ADEQ, Teresa Marks. "We have worked toward this goal for several years and appreciate the cooperation of EPA in the process."

EPA believes states are best equipped to run GHG air permitting programs, and the EPA will now rescind the federal program for GHG permitting in Arkansas. Arkansas serves as a model for other states in developing state-lead GHG permitting programs and successfully collaborating with EPA on the review and approval for issuing GHG air permits.

More about activities in EPA Region 6 is available at <http://www.epa.gov/aboutepa/region6.html>



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## **Inhofe Introduces Seven Energy, Environment Amendments to Senate Fy'14 Budget**

The office of Sen. James M. Inhofe, R-Okla., issued the following news release:

U.S. Sen. Jim Inhofe (R-Okla.), senior member of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, today filed seven energy and environment-related amendments to the Senate Budget Resolution for Fiscal Year 2014.

"Federal agencies such as the EPA have become too powerful under the Obama Administration, and they are using their unbridled authority to enact rules and regulations at will that are hindering job growth and crushing our economy," said Inhofe. "North America is ready and waiting to become energy independent, and Oklahoma is leading the way. By encourage the production of our own natural resources, we can support millions of American jobs, address sky-rocking energy costs, and reduce our dependence on foreign oil. I have proposed a number of amendments to the Senate Budget that will unleash domestic energy growth and also hold federal agencies accountable for how their regulations impact job creation and economic opportunities for Americans."

The amendments are as follows:

**Protecting Energy Costs for Low Income Families:** Amendment #173 would propose a deficit-neutral reserve fund to consider legislation amending the Clean Air Act requiring governors to approve any regulation that will increase electricity costs for low-income families before going into effect.

**Regulatory Job Loss Analysis:** Amendment #174 would propose a deficit-neutral reserve fund to consider legislation ensuring all federal agencies account for potential indirect job loss prior to enactment of a rule. Currently many agencies look only at the direct monetary costs and often use flawed models to calculate the impact.

**Spill Prevention, Control and Countermeasure (SPCC) Amendment:** Amendment #175 would trigger a budget point of order prohibiting the expenditure of funds for the enforcement of oil refinery regulations against family farms. The EPA's SPCC rule was originally designed for oil refineries but changes have forced compliance by many family farms. On March 8, Inhofe introduced bipartisan legislation, S. 496, that would provide farmers a permanent exemption from this rule.

**Endangered Species Act Reform:** Amendment #284 would propose a deficit-neutral reserve fund to

allow amendment of the Endangered Species Act to prohibit the federal listing of a species until the Fish and Wildlife Service determines that the efforts led by state and local governments are insufficient to conserve the species. Sen. Inhofe has been working closely on this issue to help protect and encourage energy and agriculture development in Western Oklahoma while conserving the lesser prairie chicken population.

**Prohibiting Greenhouse Gas Regulation:** Amendment #359 would prohibit the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) from regulating greenhouse gases for the purpose of addressing climate change. This would save taxpayers \$280 million annually in federal spending and prevent millions of lost American jobs and more than \$1 trillion in lost economic activity.

**Accomplishing Energy Independence:** Amendment #369 would propose a deficit-neutral reserve fund to reform energy laws in a manner that increases domestic energy production and eliminates the need for energy imports from abroad.


**Gasoline Price Hike Protection:** Amendment #395 would require each state governor to approve any regulation that increases gasoline or diesel fuel costs prior to that regulation going into effect.

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## **Toxic Bayou Corne sinkhole in Louisiana slowly swallowing up state: another three acres of land disappear into abyss**

by Ethan A. Huff, staff writer

(NaturalNews) Last summer, a rural area of southeastern Louisiana known as Assumption Parish was changed forever following the unexpected formation of a giant sinkhole that suddenly appeared one day out of nowhere. This mysterious sinkhole, which was later dubbed the "Great Louisiana Sinkhole," has been gradually gaining in size now for about seven months, and it appears to be picking up speed, having reportedly swallowed up an entire acre of land in just one day, and three acres of land in under a week.

If this is the first time you are hearing about the Great Louisiana Sinkhole, you can thank the mainstream media for keeping the general public in the dark about its existence, and the very serious threat it poses not only to Louisianans but to all of humanity. An apparent product of the BP Deepwater Horizon oil disaster of 2010, this anomalous sinkhole appears to be connected to underground salt domes that are collapsing, releasing toxic gases, oil, and possibly other materials.

In this particular case, degradation of salt domes near Napoleonville in Assumption Parish appear to be responsible for triggering the formation of the Great Louisiana Sinkhole, which has gained considerable size since it first appeared last August. According to the latest estimates, which are constantly changing as the sinkhole expands, more than 12 acres have already been swallowed up, and 20 more are in the process of sinking, with no end in sight.

According to reports, flammable gases like methane are apparently leaking into the [sinkhole](#) and bubbling up to the top. A nearby well filled with butane is also threatened by the sinkhole, which is killing trees, plants, and other foliage in the area surrounding the sinkhole. You can see in the following video clips the size of the sinkhole when it first formed, and how much larger it has become since that time:

1) Here is the sinkhole as it looked during a helicopter flyover that took place on August 12, 2012:

<http://youtu.be/PQw0mTK2rHY>

2) Here is the sinkhole a little more than six months later on March 1, 2013:

<http://youtu.be/gK3fzFy-r5M>

3) And here is the sinkhole on March 8, 2013, just a few days after an additional three acres of land collapsed into it in less than a week:

<http://youtu.be/OGBc4-oWb5c>

## **Will the sinkhole and collapsing salt domes trigger an explosion, or possibly destabilize the New Madrid earthquake fault?**

Despite the mainstream media's blackout of this very serious situation, truth-seekers from around the world have been closely watching this situation to see what develops. And so far, nothing positive is happening. For months, [Louisiana](#) Governor Bobby Jindal ignored the sinkhole, even after it became clear that locals needed to evacuate the area for their own safety. Only recently did Gov. Jindal acknowledge the sinkhole's existence, and even then had nothing reassuring to say about how it might be mitigated.

And this is exactly why the situation is so disturbing -- at this point, due to the current size of the sinkhole

and its increasingly exponential rate of growth, it appears as though *nothing* can truly be done to stop it. And based on a sharp uptick in seismic activity throughout the area in recent days, some experts believe an explosion is imminent, or perhaps the complete destabilization of the New Madrid Fault Line, which could result in a major earthquake stemming from the area where Arkansas, Missouri, and Tennessee all meet one another.

For up-to-the-minute information about the status of the sinkhole from people on the ground in the area, you can check out the "Bayou Corne Sinkhole" Facebook page:

<http://www.facebook.com/BayouCorneSinkhole>

**Sources for this article include:**

<http://assumptionla.wordpress.com/>

<http://www.forbes.com>


<http://www.kplctv.com/story/21697420/sinkhole-swallows-pond>

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## Rio Arriba County fracking ban halted

By Chuck Slothower *The Daily Times Farmington Daily Times*  
Updated:

Daily-Times.com

FARMINGTON — Discussions in Rio Arriba County of a possible hydraulic fracturing ban have been sidelined after industry representatives lobbied against the idea.

The commission did not discuss fracturing at a meeting Thursday although a resident did raise the issue in public comments and a public hearing scheduled for March 28 to discuss a proposed oil and gas ordinance has been canceled.

Steve Henke, president of the New Mexico Oil and Gas Association, said he had discussions with county commissioners and staff, along with representatives of ConocoPhillips and Energen.

"Our commitment is to work cooperatively to provide accurate information, not only to the commission, but to the community, and work to address those concerns in a balanced way that works for everybody," Henke said.

Bans on hydraulic fracturing have popped up from New York to Colorado due to fear of the drilling processes' possible environmental effects. Industry groups have fiercely opposed the bans, saying they're unnecessary and create a patchwork of regulations across the country.

A statewide ban proposed in the recent legislative session by a Las Cruces lawmaker was killed in committee.

Local government and industry officials say they've never seen an example of hydraulic fracturing contaminating water supplies in the San Juan Basin. The process is common in the basin, where nearly all wells are fractured.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is conducting a major national study of hydraulic fracturing, also known as fracking. The process involves injecting large volumes of water, sand and chemicals underground to break apart rock and release oil and gas.

Fracking is especially critical to horizontal drilling, a technique being used to explore the basin's Mancos Shale layer for oil.

Oil and gas representatives appear to have helped kill any move toward a fracking ban in Rio Arriba County. The county is no longer actively considering a ban, Henke said.

"My members are concerned about it, and NMOGA is active on their behalf," he said.

County commissioners did not return a message Friday seeking comment.

Rio Arriba County is directly east of San Juan County. The county has been home to drilling for decades and has thousands of wells. Drilling there has focused in historically produced areas near Gobernador, Rosa, Lindrith and Largo Canyon, Henke said.

Some exploratory drilling is taking place near Cebolla.

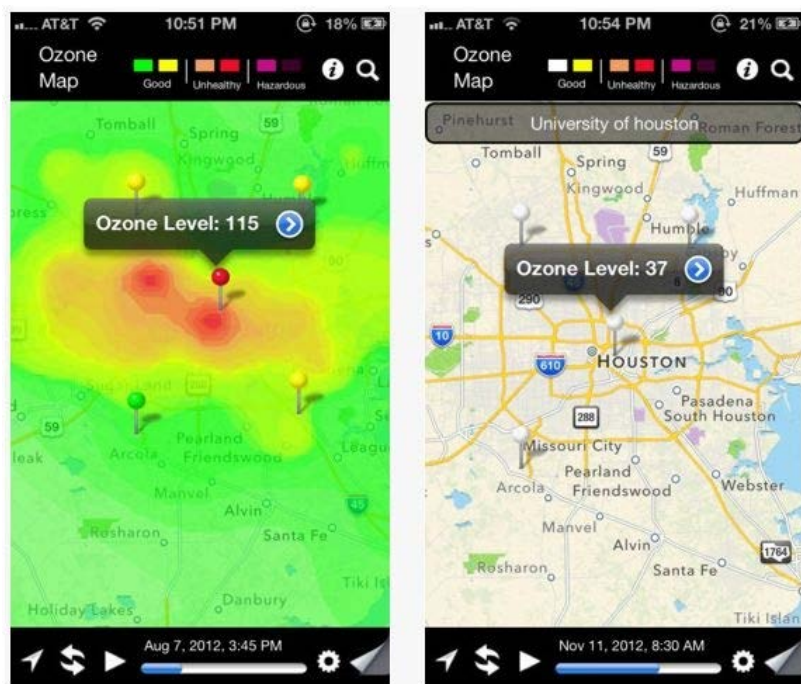
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MAPS

## Mapping the Noxious Ozone Plumes Over Houston

JOHN METCALFE MAR 22, 2013 1 COMMENT



Smartphone technology makes it easy nowadays to avoid thunderstorms. Just download a [Doppler-radar app](#), and you'll rarely be caught in the middle of a cornfield with a monster tornado passing through.

And now there's an app that monitors chemical weather – in particular, the noxious clouds of ozone that noiselessly drift through cities, scorching lungs, triggering asthma attacks and herding urbanites toward their [premature deaths](#).

The free "OzoneMap" ([iTunes](#), [Google](#)) will only help the residents of Houston, but that's no small thing: The Houston/Baytown/Huntsville region comes in eighth place for most ozone-polluted cities in America, as ranked by the [American Lung Association](#). Persistently sunny weather, a battalion of petrochemical facilities and scads of fuming cars on the road make Houston a nightmare for anyone who's chemically sensitive. For these folks, walking outside is like playing a lower-stakes version of Russian roulette, with 30 to 40 days of the year fogged with [hazardous](#) levels of ozone.

Texas does post [hourly ozone readings](#) from a couple dozen monitors throughout the Houston area, but their Excel-like appearance with [flurries of numbers](#) might be daunting to people who like a more visual presentation. That's where the OzoneMap comes in. Designed by specialists at the [University of Houston](#), the Air Alliance Houston and the American Lung Association, the program shows a real-time map of Houston stalked by huge red and purple blobs, representing ozone blown about on the wind.

The app makes it clear that while some neighborhoods might be rife with foul air, others are relatively clean. Theoretically, if people were fleet-footed enough they could use the app to beat a course through the city that avoided these crawling toxic air masses altogether.

The researchers say they hope this technology will be helpful to people who've become desensitized enough to Houston's reoccurring ozone storms that they don't check the weather each day. Now, all

we need is an app like this for every major city in the world (London's [already got one!](#)), and we all can breathe safely.

Keywords: Houston, apps, Texas, air pollution, ozone



John Metcalfe is a staff writer at The Atlantic Cities. [All posts »](#)

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SF Gate, March 23, 2013

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (AP) — Arkansas will become the first state in the south-central region to develop its own program for issuing permits to facilities that emit greenhouse-gas pollution.

Beginning in April, companies will no longer be required to go through a federal permit application program but instead can get the qualifying paperwork and permits needed from the Arkansas [Department of Environmental Quality](#).

"Right now businesses that are going through this process have to go through us and the Environmental Protection Agency, so that's the biggest significance," [Katherine Benenati](#), a spokesman for the state agency, said. "It's really just a one-stop shop for these permits now."

The state agency has been working with the EPA since 2010 to develop the program. Arkansas and 11 other states were told by the EPA in 2010 to make changes to their air pollution regulations.

The Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality spent about 18 months drafting the new program and holding public hearings on it, Benenati said.

"We haven't put anything in there that is any more stringent than federal regulations," she told the [Arkansas Democrat-Gazette](#) (<http://is.gd/EaDOZN>).

The state agency submitted its proposed program for EPA approval in November.

The EPA issued a statement Friday announcing its approval, calling Arkansas' program "a model for other states in developing (state-led greenhouse-gas) permitting programs and successfully collaborating with EPA on the review and approval for issuing (greenhouse gas) air permits."

Arkansas is the first state in a five-state region, which also includes Louisiana, Oklahoma, Texas and New Mexico, to develop its own permit program.

"Businesses and communities benefit when environmental regulators are effective and efficient in doing their job," EPA Regional Administrator [Ron Curry](#) said. "They are not going to have to be dealing with people in Dallas (site of the regional EPA office) anymore, as opposed to dealing with people in Little Rock. That's going to save them time and money, and they will only be answering to the folks in Little Rock."

Because permits and the application processes vary depending on how much greenhouse gas pollution a facility emits, it is hard to determine how much shorter the process will be now, Benenati said.

"We are staffed to run the program, and the plan will allow industries to deal with one agency and one administrative process. That should certainly make things easier and quicker," she said.

Texas is the only other state in the region that is close to developing its own permit program. Its state Legislature is required to pass the necessary legislation before the state can move forward.

"That goes back to the fact that Arkansas was really ahead of the curve here," Curry said. "They came in with the necessary requirements and we worked well together."



He praised Department of Environmental Quality Director [Teresa Marks](#) and her team for their accomplishment.

A spokesman for [Waste Management, Inc.](#) - owner and operator of landfills in North Little Rock, Springdale, Pine Bluff and Danville - said the company looks forward to a quicker air-permit process.

Read more: <http://www.sfgate.com/news/science/article/EPA-gives-Ark-OK-to-issue-greenhouse-gas-permits-4379139.php#ixzz2OZDdbE5i>

## City Corner: Anything you put into gutters, drains may end up in our drinking water

By Jennifer Sourdellia

Originally published March 24, 2013 at 10:57 p.m., updated March 24, 2013 at 10:57 p.m.

I recently received some questions about stormwater and storm drains and how they are regulated. Please see the questions and responses below.

What is stormwater?

Federal law defines stormwater as water from rains, snow or ice that flows across the ground and paved surfaces. Stormwater that does not seep into the ground will flow down driveways and streets into gutters then into a system of underground pipes known as a storm drain system.

This system leads directly to the city's creeks and outfalls and eventually to the Guadalupe River.

Is stormwater treated before it flows into our rivers or creeks?

No. Stormwater flows through the storm drain system and directly into the Guadalupe River. Because it does not receive any treatment prior to flowing into the river and it carries any pollutants in the storm drains with it, stormwater regulations were established by the federal government to protect the nation's rivers.

What are the major pollutants in Victoria's stormwater?

Sediment from construction sites and roadways is the largest pollutant in our area. Chemical-based fertilizers, oil, antifreeze, detergents, pesticides and yard debris are also washed into the storm drains from driveways, backyards, parking lots and streets.

What is the city doing to regulate stormwater pollution from construction and industrial pollution?

The city has adopted discharge regulations as required by the Environmental Protection Agency and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality for construction, post-construction and industrial activities. This ordinance protects the city's storm sewers from pollutants generated from these types of activities. For more information on stormwater, visit the city's website at [victoriatx.org/publicworks/stormwater.asp](http://victoriatx.org/publicworks/stormwater.asp).

Doesn't rain wash yard trimmings and soil into the creeks and rivers anyway?

In a natural setting, the amount of debris would be limited to the leaves of plants and trees bordering the river. In our urban setting, yard waste, leaves and dirt on paved areas across Victoria are washed into rivers and waterways through the storm sewer. Large amounts of organic debris can alter the natural balance of our creeks and rivers.

So I should not put anything into the gutters or storm drains?

Right. The Victoria city code prohibits anyone from putting anything into the storm drain system.

What else can I do to keep our storm drains clear and unpolluted?

An easy step to protect our stormwater system is for all residents to keep the gutters and drains in front of their property clear of leaves, trash, yard waste, oak pollen or other debris.

What can I do if I see someone dumping something into a storm drain?

Call 361-485-3186 to report illegal discharges into the storm sewer system.

Do you have a question about the city of Victoria? Please submit your questions and comments about any city department to Jennifer Sourdellia in the Communications/Public Information Office by emailing [jsourdellia@victoriatx.org](mailto:jsourdellia@victoriatx.org) or mail to P.O. Box 1758, Victoria, TX 77902.

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## McKinney council renews old debate on fluoride

McKINNEY - In some ways, this latest fight over fluoridated water echoes back to the 1950s and '60s, when adding fluoride to drinking water was either a panacea for the problems of tooth decay or a ploy to poison the American water supply. The language is far more civil now, and few call fluoridation a communist plot. But at a recent City Council meeting in McKinney, passions ran high on both sides, with the applause from partisans so frequent that Mayor Brian Loughmiller cautioned that clapping for every speaker would only lengthen a hearing that ultimately ran more than two hours. If the council ultimately decides it doesn't want fluoride in the water - the issue is on the agenda for a work session in early April - it's only a tiny first step.

McKinney is just one of 13 member cities in the North Texas Municipal Water District, and ending fluoridation requires that all 13 reach the same decision. "If all 13 cities agreed, they would send in letters supporting stopping fluoridation and we'd put a memorandum together for our board, and then we would take action on it," said Denise Hickey, the water district spokeswoman. "That's how this originated back in the early '80s." Council member Ray Ricchi, the point person in the ongoing debate, argues that when fluoridating water swept the country decades ago, it was seen as the best way to protect people, particularly children, from future dental problems. But that was before fluoride was added to toothpastes and mouthwash, and before dentists began dabbing pharmaceutical-grade fluoride on their patients' teeth. The fluoride in water, Ricchi said, is anything but pharmaceutical-grade. McKinney's water comes from the North Texas Municipal Water District. And like most water suppliers in the U.S., the North Texas district uses fluorosilicic acid, also called hydrofluorosilicate, largely produced as a byproduct of manufacturing fertilizer, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Opponents call fluorosilicic acid "toxic." But proponents argue that it's perfectly safe at the concentrations used in water, and say that many substances seen as vital to human health, including vitamins D, B6, A and E, are also considered toxic in concentrated forms. The Environmental Protection Agency allows water systems to add fluoride to a maximum of 4 milligrams per liter, or 4 parts per million. The North Texas district uses far less, though, officials say. Hickey said the water supply has some fluoride in it naturally, between .2 and .5 milligrams per liter, and the district adds fluoride to raise the level to a total of .7 to 1.2 parts per million. The EPA is considering lowering the maximum level of fluoride, but the district will still be below that level, she said. Ending fluoridation would save money, but not a tremendous amount, Hickey said. In 2012, the district spent \$371,575 on fluorosilicic acid, "which is like .03 to .05 percent of our budget," she said. Proponents of fluoridated water, particularly area dentists and the American and Texas dental associations, say fluoride's benefits far outweigh its risks, which they say are primarily the appearance of brown spots on tooth enamel. "I've been to many,

many fluoride hearings, and it's usually a small group that has concerns," said Dr. John Findley, a past president of both associations and a dentist who has practiced in Plano for 42 years. "I don't pretend to be an expert in chemistry, but anecdotally over 42 years of practice, I've seen very little harm to teeth from fluoride." The CDC has described fluoridated water as "one of the 10 great public health achievements of the 20<sup>th</sup> century." Findley described dental disease as "the most common chronic disease we face in the United States, and in many cases, it's answered by that little bit of fluoride." And since many people don't see a dentist on a regular basis, fluoride ensures that they have some protection against dental problems, he said. It also has the advantage of providing some protection to the surface of the teeth, and internally as children's new teeth are formed, Findley said. But the critics dispute that, and maintain that people get plenty of fluoride from other sources. And they point to studies that say children get more fluoride - much of it through formula or juices made with tap water - than they need or can adequately process. For Ricchi, fluoride use should be a personal decision, not medication done on a mass scale. "Tell me the truth about fluoride, and let me make my own decision," he said. "You need to educate people, and then it should be their choice. "Unfortunately, we don't have a choice."

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## Dem amendment would block regulations on power plant emissions

By Ben Goad - 03/22/13 11:55 AM ET

Calling proposed power plant emissions standards unattainable, Sen. Joe Manchin is seeking to block their enactment with language in the federal budget resolution [now under consideration](#) in the upper chamber.

The West Virginia Democrat's amendment takes aim at pending regulations that would set limits on carbon dioxide emissions from new power plants, which critics say would effectively prohibit new coal-fired plants and damage the economies of several states.

The measure is among [a flood of hundreds of budget amendments](#) being voted on Friday. Republicans introduced the vast majority of the measures, eight of which target federal regulations.

Manchin is part of a group of coal-country Democrats that has [pressed for changes](#) to the New Source Performance Standard, [unveiled](#) by the Environmental Protection Agency a year ago.

Under the proposed rules, new power plants that burn fossil fuels could release no more than 1,000 pounds of carbon dioxide per megawatt-hour.

While new natural-gas plants could to meet the standard without additional technology, new coal plants would need to add updated technology to capture and store emissions.

"The new regulations attempt to force standards on coal emissions that would not only be incredibly expensive, but impossible to achieve even with advanced technology," Manchin said in a statement issued Friday.

He argued that the regulations, part of the Obama administration's effort to counter the effects of climate change, would not have a tangible benefit.

"After all, experts agree that emissions from all U.S. power plants have only a marginal impact on global emissions, and this already small share is shrinking every year, as China, India, and others dramatically scale up their fossil fuel use," Manchin said.

If adopted into law, the amendment would block funding to implement the regulations.

Source:

<http://thehill.com/blogs/regwatch/energyenvironment/289837-dem-amendment-would-block-power-plant-emission-regulations>

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# Arkansas, Oklahoma Senators Want Farms Exempt from EPA Rule

by **Associated Press**

Posted 3/8/2013 01:03 pm

Updated 2 weeks ago

LITTLE ROCK - Arkansas' two U.S. senators and one from Oklahoma joined other senators in introducing a bill to exempt some farmers from an Environmental Protection Agency requirement regarding fuel storage.

The bill by Sens. Mark Pryor and John Boozman of Arkansas and Jim Inhofe of Oklahoma was introduced Friday.

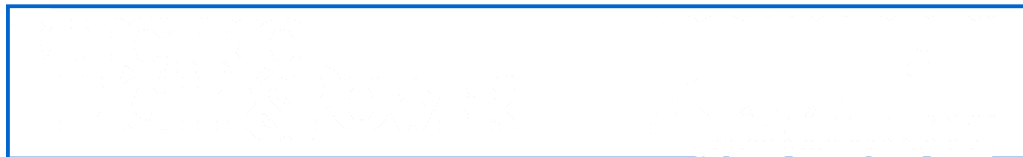
The EPA rule requires farmers who have oil and gas tanks to have a spill prevention control plan that the senators say is just like plans required of major refineries.

The bill would exempt farmers who have above-ground oil storage tanks with a capacity of less than 10,000 gallons. It also allows farmers who are regulated under the rule to have less than 42,000 gallons of above-ground storage capacity to self-certify their own plans.

Pryor is a Democrat. Boozman and Inhofe are Republicans.

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## Meeting Set in Jasper on Hog Farm

The Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality issued the following news release:

The Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality will hold an informational meeting in Jasper on May 8 to provide information on a permit issued for C & H Hog Farms to operate in Mount Judea.

The meeting will start at 6 p.m. in the Carroll Electric Cooperative building at 511 E Court St., Jasper. ADEQ staff will make a presentation on the permit and will be available to answer questions.

"In recent weeks, we've fielded a number of questions on the facility," ADEQ Director Teresa Marks said. "We want to visit the community to provide information in person and hopefully answer some questions that have been raised about the operation and how our permitting process works."

The Department granted coverage in August 2012 to C & H Hog Farms under a General Permit for Concentrated Feeding Operations (CAFOs). C & H Hog Farm, which is under construction, is the first facility that sought coverage under the CAFO General Permit and to date is the only facility that has been approved under the General Permit.

The CAFO permit program was the result of a 2003 lawsuit against the Environmental Protection Agency that required EPA to regulate concentrated animal feeding operations. States that had delegation from EPA for the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit programs were required to either adopt the EPA permit or develop their own permit for concentrated animal feeding operations.

ADEQ held six public hearings in 2011 before adopting the General Permit for Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations. Such operations include hog farms, dairy farms and poultry farms. A General Permit is a permit that is applicable for a class or category of similar facilities and has specific conditions and requirements that must be met by any facility that seeks coverage pursuant to it.

Information on the facility can be viewed online at [www.adeq.state.ar.us](http://www.adeq.state.ar.us). Viewers should first select databases in the blue tab, then select "ADEQ Facility and Permit Summary (PDS)." To pull up the information, viewers can type "C & H" in the facility name and hit search.


Contact: Katherine Benenati, 501/682-0821, [benenati@adeq.state.ar.us](mailto:benenati@adeq.state.ar.us)

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Daily News

## Environmentalists Seek To Force EPA To Weigh Climate Effects In Sewer Pact

Posted: March 25, 2013

Environmentalists are seeking to force EPA to consider sea-level rise and other effects of climate change in a proposed enforcement settlement seeking to prevent overflows in Miami-Dade County's sewage collection and transmission system, in a case which could force the agency to adopt a policy stance beyond its current posture.

But the group, Biscayne Bay Waterkeeper, Inc., is facing legal hurdles as the Department of Justice (DOJ) is fighting its efforts to intervene in pending litigation, *United States of America v. Miami-Dade County*, to enforce a future draft consent decree.

The Waterkeeper group filed a [Jan. 23 motion](#) in the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Florida seeking to intervene on DOJ's behalf, but state and federal attorneys are opposing the group's intervention, saying in a [Feb. 11 response](#) that the group's motion to intervene is premature because the parties have not yet sought to enter a proposed consent decree.

DOJ and Florida officials are also seeking to limit the scope of the environmentalists' challenge in order to prevent them from engaging in discovery.

The court is slated to hear oral arguments on Waterkeeper's motion to intervene in late April.

The group is seeking to intervene in settlement discussions over a proposed consent decree EPA and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) are negotiating with the county, charging that it fails to consider how climate change-related impacts to the Biscayne Bay region might complicate the new consent decree's proposal to repair and upgrade its wastewater treatment systems.

The proposed decree "will not achieve or maintain compliance with CWA, primarily because it fails to address the sea level rise and climate impacts (expected by the scientific community) that will, if not appropriately accounted for, cause major failures in the sewage collection and treatment system during its useful life," the group says in one brief.

If successful, the environmentalists approach appears aimed at going beyond EPA's current policy stance. The agency has acknowledged that climate change is a factor for consideration when crafting sewer policies. In its climate strategy, released last December, EPA's water office acknowledged that "more intense rainfall can overload drainage systems and water treatment facilities, increasing the risk of waterborne diseases."

"This is of particular concern for combined sewer overflow (CSO) communities," the document says, because "increases in such events are likely to cause greater property damage, higher insurance rates, a heavier burden on emergency management, increased cleanup and rebuilding costs, and a growing financial toll on businesses, homeowners, and insurers."

EPA has in [some cases](#) allowed CSO communities, which have combined sewer and stormwater systems, to consider the use of green infrastructure technologies to limit increased stormwater runoff. But the pending case appears to be unique because it is aimed at sanitary sewer overflow (SSO) systems.

### Citizen Suit

The group last year threatened to file a citizen suit against the county's Water and Sewer Department, alleging violations of prior consent decrees with state and federal regulators to operate sewage collection and transmission in order to avoid discharges of untreated sewage into public waters.

But DOJ preempted the citizen suit, filing its enforcement action against the county last December.

While the group March 1 filed a separate complaint to pursue their citizen suit, Judge Cecilia M. Altonaga ruled March 4 to close the citizen's suit because the environmentalists raised the same issues in their motion to intervene. If the environmentalists are permitted to intervene in the federal enforcement case, they could then move to re-open the citizen suit and consolidate the cases.

Attorneys for the Waterkeeper argue that not only has Miami-Dade violated its existing consent decrees under the CWA -- due to "repeated, regular and polluting discharges of raw sewage and sewage treatment plant effluent violations" in the past five years, EPA and the county have also have failed to take action on an ocean outfall National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit application. That condition, environmentalists say, is necessary to deal with before entering into a new, updated consent decree due to the environmental and climate change implications of its ocean outfall permit obligations.

Under Florida law, wastewater treatment systems must eliminate ocean outfalls by 2025; Miami-Dade County must provide a final plan for phase-out of ocean outfalls by July 1, 2013, and the plan must demonstrate how the county will treat and handle its wastewater from those outfalls so that 60 percent can be reused in the system. But thus far, EPA has not made a determination on the county's central plants' NPDES ocean outfall permit.

Environmentalists argue that the ocean outfall permit must be resolved before, or as part of the new consent decree's plans for repairs, upgrades and replacements to the county's wastewater treatment facilities. Further, its plans for ocean outfall phase-out should take into account projected effects of climate change, such as predicted sea level rising in the region, environmentalists say.

"If you're going to try to eliminate some of the [ocean] outfall, you should deal with rising sea level," an environmentalist attorney says, adding that the environmentalists want to have that discussion as part of the consent decree process.

Further, EPA's draft consent decree calls for the expenditure of approximately \$1.5 billion to refurbish sewage treatment plants, including repairs, upgrades and pipe replacements, and environmentalists say EPA and the county should first consider "whether these plants are going to be in operation in 30 years," the attorney says.

For example, the consent decree includes plans to rebuild a sewage plant at Virginia Key -- near the ocean -- for \$555 million. Environmentalists say EPA and Miami-Dade County should first consider their ocean outfall obligation requirements and the rising sea level issues before spending that money on repairs to the facility in its current location.

The current location near the ocean will make less sense once outfalls are reduced, the attorney noted. Rather than re-consider the location of the Virginia Key plant, however, the county's ocean outfall phase-out proposals include construction of a major deep well injection facility, an approach the environmentalists say in their argument is "not a meaningful reuse of wastewater."

### Climate Change

[In its initial filing in the citizen suit](#), attorneys for Biscayne Bay include several oceanographers' and climatologists' witness testimonies on Florida's vulnerability to sea level rise. "While climate change will be felt globally, the low-lying and heavily-populated coastline of south Florida makes it extremely vulnerable to the effects of climate change, particularly sea level rise," the expert testimony states.

The experts also note that current projections estimate that Florida's sea levels will rise by at least 9 to 24 inches by 2060 -- numbers that are even lower than 2012 projections for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association.

Environmentalists also say that the consent decree fails to consider salt water intrusion into a local aquifer -- also caused by rising sea levels, recommending that the county "recharge" the Biscayne Aquifer with fresh water, so sewage treatment system upgrades should take the need to recycle fresh water into account before spending money to re-build the sewage plant, the expert testimony notes.

The attorney says it is likely that the environmentalists "are not advocating for a particular outcome" in the case, but rather, believe that the county should make decisions on the consent decree with federal enforcement authorities to decide, for instance, whether or not to keep the Virginia Key facility in place or move it elsewhere.

"This is about the county giving up control -- let's make decisions together through the consent decree, not let the county dictate," the attorney says. -- *Amanda Palleschi* ( [apalleschi@iwppnews.com](mailto:apalleschi@iwppnews.com) )

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Everything New Orleans

## Emergency management officials gather in New Orleans Monday for the 13th annual National Hurricane Conference



By [Mark Schleifstein, NOLA.com | The Times-Picayune](#)

on March 25, 2013 at 11:47 AM

Emergency management officials are meeting in New Orleans this week to review lessons learned during last year's [Hurricanes Isaac](#) and [Sandy](#) and to find out the latest techniques to respond and recover from future hurricanes.

The 13th annual, four-day [National Hurricane Conference](#) features comprehensive training sessions including how to make buildings more resilient to damage from wind and floods; how managers of electrical, sewer and water utilities can work with federal, state and local emergency officials during disasters; and the role of amateur radio in both the hurricane forecasting process and the support of emergency responders in the aftermath of hurricanes and other disasters.

The conference will feature [National Hurricane Center](#) Director Rick Knabb and [Federal Emergency Management Agency](#) Director Craig Fugate, as well as emergency managers from cities, counties, parishes and states across the nation.

On Tuesday, the conference features "rap sessions" where professionals share ideas on key issues.

I've been asked to participate in the public education/media rap, "Exploring the Public Response to a Hurricane," at 8:30 a.m. Tuesday, along with Knabb; former center director Max Mayfield, now a hurricane specialist with WPLG-TV in Miami; Bryan Norcross, a meteorologist and senior executive director with The Weather Channel; Robert Brookens, also known as [Barometer Bob](#), who hosts a weekly weather discussion on the web; and retired Army Lieut. General Russel Honore, who oversaw response in New Orleans during Hurricane Katrina and is now a preparedness contributor for CNN.

The conference also features panels dealing with response issues faced on tropical islands of the Caribbean and Pacific oceans.

The conference begins at 8:30 a.m. Monday at the Hilton New Orleans Riverside. More about the conference, including registration information, is available on the web at [hurricanemeeting.com](http://hurricanemeeting.com).

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